



Lightning

EVERY THUNDERSTORM contains this potential killer. It does not matter if the thunderstorm is a huge severe storm or a typical summer afternoon storm. In a thunderstorm, that electrical charge, which may reach 100 million volts, is always present as it searches for the path of least resistance to complete the circuit from the cloud. It might strike you, an isolated tree, or an object in the open. Keep in mind that you do not have to be standing directly beneath a cloud to be struck. Lightning can strike under clear skies as long as the parent thunderstorm cloud is nearby.

Lightning has been called "the under-rated killer," and rightfully so since it does not usually get as much headline attention compared to other dangerous weather phenomena. Nationally, 100 deaths and 500 injuries on average occur in the United States as a result of lightning strikes. In a typical year, lightning will strike the U.S. over 21 million times and will claim more

Anyone outdoors is particularly vulnerable to lightning. To keep people safe when lightning is in the area, every person, group, or school involved in outdoor activities should have a plan that can be activated. Take time to learn lightning safety rules. That quick dash out in the open with a nearby thunderstorm area may unnecessarily expose you to the possibility of being struck. Is it worth the risk?

The 30/30 Safety Lightning Rule could save your life!

The first '30' means that you need to take cover if you hear thunder within 30 seconds of the seeing the lightning flash.

The second '30' means that you should wait at least 30 minutes after the last lightning flash or thunder clap to resume normal outdoor activities (the "all clear" signal)

Lightning Safety

- Get indoors in a strong sturdy building!

Motor vehicles provide good shelter from lightning as well.

- Avoid using the phone except for emergencies and stay away from windows.

- Avoid being in or near high places, open fields, isolated trees, unprotected gazebos, rain or picnic shelters, baseball dugouts, towers, flagpoles, light poles, bleachers, metal fences, convertible vehicles, golfcarts, motorcycles, scooters, and lawn mowers.

- Stay away from metallic objects such as fences, clotheslines, or pipes.

- Move away from bodies of water.

- In a forest, seek shelter in a low area under a thick growth of small trees.

- In open areas, go to a low place such as a ravine or valley. Be alert for flooding.

- If you feel your hair stand on end, lightning may be about to strike you. Crouch down low, but do not lie flat on the ground.

Remember, there is no truth to the old myth that "lightning never strikes twice in the same place."